

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
ASHEVILLE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
) DOCKET NO. 1:23-CR-7
v.)
) **FACTUAL BASIS**
AARON JOSEPH WEHRSTEIN,)
a/k/a "JessicaLovesYou#1816")
a/k/a "@Jaybirdlover16")

NOW COMES the United States of America, by and through Dena J. King, United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina, and hereby files this Factual Basis in support of the plea agreement filed simultaneously in this matter.

This Factual Basis is filed pursuant to Local Criminal Rule 11.2 and does not attempt to set forth all of the facts known to the United States at this time. By their signatures below, the parties expressly agree that there is a factual basis for the guilty plea(s) that the defendant will tender pursuant to the plea agreement, and that the facts set forth in this Factual Basis are sufficient to establish all of the elements of the crime(s). The parties agree not to object to or otherwise contradict the facts set forth in this Factual Basis.

Upon acceptance of the plea, the United States will submit to the Probation Office a "Statement of Relevant Conduct" pursuant to Local Criminal Rule 32.4. The defendant may submit (but is not required to submit) a response to the Government's "Statement of Relevant Conduct" within seven days of its submission. The parties understand and agree that this Factual Basis does not necessarily represent all conduct relevant to sentencing. The parties agree that they have the right to object to facts set forth in the presentence report that are not contained in this Factual Basis. Either party may present to the Court additional relevant facts that do not contradict facts set forth in this Factual Basis.

1. On August 28, 2022, Aaron Joseph WEHRSTEIN began communicating with a 12-year-old male (herein referred to as Minor Male Victim 1 or MMV1) on

the Discord messaging application. MMV1 informed WEHRSTEIN that he was 15 years old.

2. In one of his early messages on August 28, 2022, WEHRSTEIN asked MMV1 if he would be comfortable sending pictures. To induce and entice MMV1 to send him sexually explicit pictures, WEHRSTEIN sent MMV1 a picture of a nude adult female. WEHRSTEIN claimed to be the woman in the picture. WEHRSTEIN then asked MMV1 to send him pictures of his penis. In response to the picture WEHRSTEIN sent, and his request for pictures, MMV1 created an image of himself exposing his penis to the camera. MMV1 sent this image to WEHRSTEIN via Discord.
3. On August 29, 2022, WEHRSTEIN continued communicating with MMV1 on Discord. WEHRSTEIN continued sending MMV1 pornographic images of adult women who he claimed to be.
4. At approximately 1:00AM (EST) on August 29, 2022, at WEHRSTEIN's request, MMV1 created two images of himself exposing his penis to the camera. MMV1 sent both images to WEHRSTEIN via Discord.
5. At approximately 1:05AM (EST) that same day, WEHRSTEIN asked MMV1 for a video of himself masturbating. Shortly after WEHRSTEIN requested the video, MMV1 created a video of himself masturbating and sent it to WEHRSTEIN via Discord.
6. During a forensic examination of WEHRSTEIN's Samsung Galaxy A12 cellular phone, additional conversations between WEHRSTEIN and other minor males were discovered. Using the same persona described above, WEHRSTEIN used Twitter to persuade the following minors to produce and send him images of child pornography:
 - a. MMV2 – identified as a 13-year-old male residing in Princeton, New Jersey. MMV2 was 12 years old at the time he was communicating with WEHRSTEIN.
 - b. MMV3 – identified as a 17-year-old male residing in Houston, Texas.

- c. MMV4 – identified as a 14-year-old male residing in Horizon City, Texas. MMV4 was 13 years old at the time he was communicating with WEHRSTEIN.
- d. MMV5 – identified as a 15-year-old male residing in Singapore.
- e. MMV6 – identified as a 14-year-old male residing in Hastings, Pennsylvania.
- f. MMV7 – identified as a 12-year-old male residing in the United Kingdom.
- g. MMV8 - identified as a 13-year-old male residing in Santa Ana, California.

7. Discord and Twitter operate via the Internet, which is a means and facility of foreign and interstate commerce.

8. At the time of these offenses, WEHRSTEIN was in Polk County, within the Western District of North Carolina. MMV1 was residing in the United Kingdom.

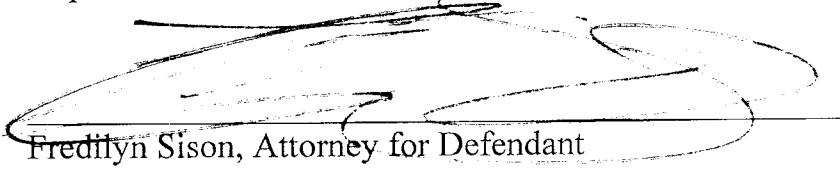
DENA J. KING
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY



Alexis Solheim
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Defendant's Counsel's Signature and Acknowledgment

I have read this Factual Basis, the Bill of Indictment, and the plea agreement in this case, and have discussed them with the defendant. Based on those discussions, I am satisfied that the defendant understands the Factual Basis, the Bill of Indictment, and the plea agreement. I hereby certify that the defendant does not dispute this Factual Basis.


Fredilyn Sison, Attorney for Defendant

DATED: 3/22/24